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ABSTRACT

The purpose of teaching speech is to give students enough basics and practice so they can become more confident and effective at the podium. Theory may be useful but there is no substitute for practice: students in a speech class taught at a community college gave six speeches during the semester, three of them solo speeches and two in groups. The process of making students into confident speakers begins with the instructor's getting to know each student and his or her fears, weaknesses or concerns. Students are then introduced to a system of speech preparation, outlined in a recently published book, "I Would Rather Be Audited by the IRS than Give a Speech." The instructor first talks about the PA system, which stands for "purpose" and "audience," both of which the speaker must be well aware. Then he introduces his "Popeye System," or POPI, which stands for preparation, organization, presentation, and improvement. All these areas are key to controlling anxiety. Most fears stem from not turning on the "PA system," and from lack of "preparation" and "organization" because the purpose and audience are not clear. A speaker cannot correctly present if the preparation and organization are haphazard. After the speeches are given, the instructor gives a grade for each element of the POPI system because some students are better at preparation and/or organization than presentation. Group exercises are enjoyable--a lesson in interpersonal communication. (Grid grade system is attached, as well as an outline of the course.) (TB)

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Abstract for The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development

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Teaching Speech at a community college requires both a disciplined as well as a non-traditional approach.

I bring to the classroom nearly 40 years of public speaking, plus some 20 years of developing and conducting seminars, workshops, and formal classes in all forms of verbal communicationAs such, I require of my students what I require of myself; an effective speech/presentation cannot start without clearly identifying the **purpose** and the **audience**.

The **purpose** of teaching Speech is to give my students enough basics and practice so they can become more confident and effective at the podium. Theory has its place, but there is not any substitute for actually **giving** a talk/presentation. My students give **6 speeches -- 3 solo**, 2 in groups, and the final can be either. Feedback each semester confirms this approach.

Since this is a Speech class, I do not give written exams. The only writing is at the beginning where I ask my students to list their fears. This helps me insure I will address **all** their anxieties. It also helps establish their trust in me.

I return the papers unmarked at the end of the semester, and ask them to judge for themselves how far they have progressed in controlling their anxieties. One student read his paper and declared: "I didn't write this. I don't have those fears."

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That leads to the second aspect, **audience.** I need to know whether my students have any or even some speaking experience. I need to know whether they are ashamed of an accent or lack of vocabulary. I need to know that their greatest fear is audience reaction.

At the first session, I pair them off, have them interview one another for 10 minutes each, and then "introduce" their partner. This is much better than having each one get up and talk about him or herself. I continue to be amazed at some of the personal things that are revealed. Some romances even have blossomed in my classes, while others have disintegrated.

My students come from all types of backgrounds, and from many countries. Except for a few instances, they do not know each other. By the end of the semester, many new friendships have been formed, and they often confer with one another on their assignments. I even had a mother and daughter in one class, and it was interesting how they introduced one another.

Some of my students are headed for an Associate degree. Some transfer to four-year universities. Others just want to further their education. Regardless of what educational road they travel, I assume my Speech class may be the only one they take in verbal communication.

From my newspaper reporting days, I apply the rule of answering the 5 W's: Who, What, Why, Where, and When -- not necessarily in that order. The Who is my class. The What is the course. The Where is our community college. The Why is that my course is a requirement for the Associate degree. It also is what we do the most of during our work time, along with listening. Yet, we are the least prepared for it.

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Being an effective speaker/presenter is a career booster. I cite the book **BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING** in which high management women who aspired to top executive jobs (but did not get them) were "noticed" giving a speech, conducting a briefing, or being a panelist. That is how my speaking/presenting career developed. During the course, I describe my successes along with my failures.

The When concerns the 16 weeks or less I have with my students. I start with basics. In my newly published book **I WOULD RATHER BE AUDITED BY THE I.R.S. THAN GIVE A SPEECH**, I cite a famous gridiron coach who began Spring practice with these words: "Gentlemen, **this** is a football!"

I confess I use every gimmick I can think of so my students will remember what I teach them. For example, the **purpose** and **audience** become "turning on your **PA System**." Adding the element of **time**, this makes it **PAT**, "not to be confused with point after touchdown in football." I harp on this all semester.

Then, there is my exclusive **Popeye System**. Actually, it stands for the acronym **POPI**, which is **Preparation, Organization, Presentation,** and **Improvement**. These are the keys to controlling anxiety and becoming effective and confident. Since there are a variety of reasons why all speakers get nervous, each must be clearly diagnosed before a "prescription" can be ordered. One of the chapters in my book is titled, **One Size Does Not Fit All**.

Dissecting **POPI**, the **preparation** and **organization** fall into what I call the pre-appearance phase. The **presentation** and **improvement** are post-appearance.

Most fears stem from not turning on that **PA System**. Then comes lack of **preparation** and **organization** because the **purpose** and **audience** are not clear. One cannot correctly **present** if the **preparation** and **organization** are haphazzard. And, without all of those in correct order and balance, **improvement** is lost.

Everyone seems to have a different way to gather material. I try to over-prepare because it is easier to whittle down than to inflate. Putting that data into logical order panics many. I recommend just going ahead and writing the **body** of the material; the opening and closing will come later. As a rule of thumb, I estimate that one sheet of 8½x11 paper double-spaced translates into about 250 words, or between 2-2½ minutes of normal speaking time. Therefore, a 5-minute speech which my students give should take up about 2 sheets of paper.

After I have written the original draft, I put it aside for a day or two, and give it a second look. Now, I am ready for the opening and closing. As with a news story, you get to the "meat and potatoes" right away. In a speech to inform, I do **not** subscribe to the school of clever openings. The audience is there to listen. Some experts recommend an attention-getting opening, or even humor. Both can be dangerous. I am reminded of the aprocryphal story of two farmers arguing over the stubborness of a mule. One tells the other, "All I have to do is whisper in his ear." The second replies, "I'll bet you $10 you can't do it." They shake hands. The first man picks up a piece of wood and swats the mule across the snout. "Hey, what are you doing?" he asks. "You lose the bet." "Oh, no," the first retorts. "First, I have to get his attention."

When stuck for a lead, I advise my students to pretend they are talking to a friend and start by saying, "Say, did you know that . . . " What follows is a sensible lead. An effective speaker wants the audience to remember **what** he or she said, not **how** it was said. The reverse applies to a speech to persuade or entertain. Of course, political speeches defy **all** rules of logic.

I subscribe to the T^3 Theory. **Tell** them what you are going to say; **Tell** them; then, **Tell** them what you have said. Nothing fancy. This does not mean you cannot supplement with body language or visual aids.

With the **preparation** and **organization** well in hand, **presentation** is the next step. One can be very well **prepared** and **organized**, yet scared to death at the prospect of making the **presentation**, especially in front of strangers.

If an introduction is involved, I advise writing one yourself. Mine lasts only 60 seconds. The **audience** wants to listen to the speech, not the introduction. As it is being given, the speaker can them concentrate on the opening. This helps block out the **audience**. While doing that, the speaker knows he/she has about a minute; further, she/he knows the introduction is accurate. I remember one emcee introducing a well known local television personality as having graduated from **Howard** University, a fine institution here. Unfortunately, the personality graduated from **Harvard** University. The emcee misheard it, and it was embarrassing.

We have addressed the **mental** phase. Now comes the moment of truth when the speaker gets to the podium. This is one of the two most crucial periods. The other is the minute or so after the speaker begins. At this point, I stress getting **physicialy** ready. Too many people look awkward at the podium; this goes for teachers as well as speakers. That conveys nervousness, and adds to anxiety on both sides of the podium. I have my students practice getting a comfortable stance. To test this, I have them place their hands at their sides. If they do not affect a swaying motion, they are comfortable. The hands can go back up to the podium.

Because many speakers are nervous, they often start out too fast, too high-pitched, or even too soft. I do not mind if they **start** out that way, but after a minute or so, they need to shift into a lower gear. Most do, as the semester goes on. Practicing my techniques, along with individual critiques, is much better than relying on doing yoga, drinking hot liquid, or reciting a mantra.

I do **not** have my students memorize their speech. That can come later on. I would rather they "speak-read" a text well than get stalled on memorized remarks.

What a speaker brings to the podium is not seen by anyone else, so the text can contain all sorts of helpful techniques. I use 5x7 cards. But whichever, a word like **SMILE** at the beginning can go a long way in easing tension. When I used to write speeches for other, sometimes I would paste a cartoon on the first card/sheet.

For those who talk too fast, I recommend double or even triple-spacing the text. I use a speech-size font typed in **bold** and triple-spaced. I encourage students to even double the space between paragraphs. I harp on shorter sentences, with a paragraph **always** ending on the same page where it began. That way, if the speaker loses his/her place, it can be found easily. Paper is cheap, so it does not make any difference if there is only one paragraph per page/card.

I tell my students that when they practice, they do it **speaking**, not reading. That way, they can get an accurate timing. Also, if they stumble over certain words or phrases, they will know to change the wording, or spell out phoenetically.

Since most people have trouble knowing when and how to establish eye contact, I have developed a system of arrows. For example, one arrow points ↑; another points ↗; a third, ↖. Before long, the arrows have pointed to all sections of the audience and the speaker does not have to worry about including everyone. The "look" should only be a second or two. This helps control a major cause of anxiety.

My students' presentations are 5 minutes, and I use a timer with a beeper that goes off if they exceed the alloted time. This helps tell me whether they have rehearsed as they have been told to do.

My grading is based on **POPI**. Using a grid system, I evaluate each speech on the four elements. I leave off the **I** for the first one. Using 4 points for an A, 3 for a B, 2 for a C, and 1 for a D, I total the points to arrive at the grade.

Why a grade for each element of **POPI**? Some students are better at **preparation** and/or **organization** than **presentation.** Since each element is very important, I need to know which needs improvement. The farther into the semester, the more critical the grade. I keep notes on each presentation so I can refer back. It also helps explain the grade and progress to the student.

Our college has one of the highest percentage of international students in the state. At the introduction, I can determine whether a student's struggle with the English language will cause a problem. I do not hesitate to advise them to drop the course. I am not into remedial English, nor am I a speech pathologist. Our pre-class screening system does not always work.

That does not mean I reject international students. On the contrary, I welcome the challenge. For the most part, I find all they need to do is speak slower and louder.

Since I am sensitive to the needs of my students, I constantly seek feedback. One of the recurring complaints is that they notice others who do not attend class. Much of my class presentation cannot be found in the text, so those who skip find they are missing a lot, and it shows in their presentations. I also warn the students that they are allowed only as many unexcused absences as the number of times the class meets in a week. I have dropped some students as far along as mid-term because of excessive absences. The other students tell me they appreciate this discipline.

If they wish, I will explain each grade and rationale -- **privately.** I remind them that they can earn an A without being perfect. I still make mistakes in speeches I give, so how can I ask more of them. Besides, trying to be perfect only leads to anxiety.

Another complaint I hear is that some instructors are so entrenched in a repetitive course structure that the class is boring/dull. Discussing a chapter they already have read is not very challenging, they say. And, I am challenging.

While none of the speeches have to be memorized, some students feel more comfortable ad-libbing or working from an outline. As long as that works, and the time discipline is adhered to, I do not mind. However, that does not work most of the time.

I do offer impromptu topics if they want to try. It is not a requirement. Some of the subjects are serious; some are sort of off-the-wall. But, I wait until the end of the semester to try this so they have a better chance.

The group exercises are the most fun. Some have been very creative. As with all talks, I let the students pick the topic. I am fascinated by some of what transpires. One group once brought in a canoe all across campus for a demonstration. I do not grade as a group, but individually. That way, each has to share the topic burden, and I time each one. However, it is a lesson in interpersonal communication.

Does my system work? Very few students do not show improvement. I see former students on campus, and they freely tell me how much of what they learned they use. One said: "I even volunteered to lead a discussion, and I never even used to raise my hand to volunteer an answer even to a simple question."

I want my students to leave my class with more than just a grade.

As I continue to be a speaker/presenter, I grade myself just as harshly as I do my students, using the **POPI System**. If I cannot practice what I preach, or preach what I practice, I do not belong in the classroom.

I have yet to conduct a class where I have not learned a new technique -- either in the way I teach, or how I can be better myself.

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GRID GRADE SYSTEM

BASED ON POPI*

*PREPARATION *PRESENTATION

*ORGANIZATION *IMPROVEMENT

SPEECH	A(4.0)	A-(3.75)	B+(3.5)	B(3.0)	B-(2.75)	C+(2.5)	C(2.0)
#1 POP	12	11	10	9	8	7	6
#2 POPI	16	15	14	12	11	10	8
#3 POPI	16	15	14	12	11	10	8
MID-TERM GRADE	44	41	38	33	30	27	22
GRADE SPREAD	A= 40-44			B= 30-39		C= 22-29	
#4 POPI	16	15	14	12	11	10	8
#5	16	15	14	12	11	10	8
#6	16	15	14	12	11	10	8
SECOND HALF GRADE	48	45	42	36	33	30	24
GRADE SPREAD	A=44-48			B= 32-43		C= 24-31	
COURSE GRADE	A= 84-92			B= 62-82+		C= 46-60+	

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PRESENTATION AT THE NISOD'S 1995 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TEACHING EXCELLENCE: "NONTRADITIONAL APPROACH TO TEACHING SPEECH -- IT'S EFFECTIVE!" GIVEN MAY 23, 1995, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Opening Remarks

Makeup of Audience/Purpose of Community College

Purpose of Teaching Speech at a Community College
- Practical Usage

Makeup of students
- Day/Evening
- Full/Part-time
- International
- Background
- Speaking Levels

Cannot teach or give speech without knowing Purpose and Audience
- Must add time

Types of speeches
- 5 minutes solo
- 20 minutes for group of 4

No written work, except for students to list their anxieties
- Returned at end of semester for self-analysis/no grade

First class
- Students interview one another/introduce
  - Ice-breaker/no grade

Assignments/Presentations
- Solo - choose own topic
  - 1 to Inform
  - 1 to Persuade
- Mid-term exam
  - Either Inform or Persuade
    - Choose own topic
- Group/4
  - 1 - Choose own topic
  - 1 - Select topic from list
- Final exam
  - Solo or group/choose own topic

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INNOVATIVE SPEECH AND PRESENTATION TRAINING EXCLUSIVES: BROWN'S BROMIDES • AUDIENCE - FRIENDLY APPROACH • "POPEYE" METHOD • FORMULA 10-10-80 • TAILORED TALK
AUTHOR OF "I WOULD RATHER BE AUDITED BY THE I.R.S. THAN GIVE A SPEECH"

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Topics
- **Choice versus pre-select**
  - **Creativity**
  - **Comfort**
  - **Level of work increases**
    - **More confidence**

Syllabus
- **Clear explanation of expectations/assignments**
- **Defines discipline**
- **Explains grading**
- **Text as guide/my book as supplement**

Grading
- **POPI Grid**
  - **Critique notes**
- **Total points determine grades**

Motivation
- **Formula 10-10-80**
  - **Self-confidence/improvement**

Procedure
- **Lay groundwork before each assignment**
  - **Allow time for assignments**

Pre-Speech Phase
- **Preparation**
  - **Based on Purpose, Audience, Time**
- **Organization**
  - **Based on Preparation**

Podium-Approach Phase
- **Physical**
- **Comfort Zone**
- **Stance**
- **Script**
  - **Paper versus cards**

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Script Format
- **Triple-space**
  - **More between paragraphs**
- **End on same side as begun**
  - **Only 2-3 paragraphs**
- **Only one side**
- **Shorter sentences**
  - **Highline/underline/bold-face**
- **Phoenetic spelling**

Presentation Phase
- **Read/memorize/outline**
  - **Use script as friend**
- **Eye contact difficulties**
  - **Arrows on script**
- **Tension**
  - **Cartoons, sayings**
- **Body language**
- **Voice**
  - **Usually too soft/fast**
    - **Anxiety**
  - **Pitch/Pause**
- **Visual aids**
  - **Script format**
  - **Timing**

Improvement Phase
- **Rehearse/Practice speaking, not reading**
  - **Timing**
    - **Q&A/visuals**

Verbal/Nonverbal Communication
- **Listening versus hearing**
- **False clues**

Feedback
- **Own self-analysis**
- **Students**
- **Constant review**

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STRAIGHTFORWARD

Judging a book by it's cover...

By Jill M. Cornish, IOM

I'VE KNOWN DAVE BROWN...for a long time and have always valued his opinions and friendship. When he asked me to read his recent book before it was published, I hesitated — if I didn't like it, what would I say? I took the manuscript along on a long trip, figuring I would have time to "look it over," as he'd asked. I had nothing to worry about: Not only did I read the book; I laughed a lot and savored the advice on every page!

I would rather be audited by the IRS than give a speech was recently published by Kendall/Hunt [ISBN 0-7872-0314-9] in paperback. The subtitle, *More than 40 ways to control your anxiety to become a more confident and effective speaker/presenter*, doesn't do justice to what's between the covers. The book is a step-by-step of 45 "Brown's Bromides" that will *definitely* entertain everyone who has ever, or will ever, get up to speak. What's more, the text will make you a much better, more relaxed presenter, if you follow Brown's excellent advice.

Two words of caution: the book's cover — a cartoon — is a bit trite. Don't judge the information contained therein by the caricatures. Secondly, don't get this book at the library; buy it — you'll want to refer to it again and again and make notes about what works especially well for you. (No, you cannot borrow *my* copy, either — I'm sure I'd never get it back.)

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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★ ★ ★ EASTERN EDITION WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1995 WHITE OAK, MARYLAND

Tax Report

BRIEFS: IRS Humor? IRS chief Richardson receives a copy of a book, "I Would Rather Be Audited by the IRS Than Give a Speech," by David H. Brown. In reply, she writes the author: "I'll think of you the next time I give a speech, and I certainly hope you'll be thinking of me the next time you get audited." . . . Jack R. Skinner of Halliburton Co. in Dallas takes over as president of Tax Executives Institute, a Washington-based corporate tax group, replacing Linda B. Burke of Aluminum Co. of America.

—TOM HERMAN

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